

The First Chapter of the Ornament

The Exalted Knower of Aspects

The first chapter of the Ornament expounds on the first of the three knowers, the exalted knower of aspects. Thus, the first chapter explains the meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras by way of presenting the omniscient mind of a Buddha. The reason for presenting the omniscient mind of a Buddha in the beginning of the Ornament is to generate enthusiasm and interest in the continua of trainees. By studying, contemplating and meditating on the first chapter trainees generate faith and aspiration to attain the result of the Mahayana path - the enlightenment of a Buddha. This aspiration in turn motivates them to continue to study, contemplate and meditate on the remaining chapters of the Ornament.

Therefore, of the two modes of presentation, this accords with the explanatory presentation.

The two modes of presentation:

1. Presentation in accordance with cause and effect where the aim of enlightenment is shown at the end; for example, the Lam Rim texts.
2. Explanatory presentation which is in accordance with the mode of understanding. Here the result is explained first in order to awaken the interest of trainees; for example, the presentation of the four noble truths.

The Ten Topics / Dharmas

The way the exalted knower of aspects is explained in the first chapter is by way of ten topics or Dharmas. In other words the omniscient mind of a Buddha is illustrated or characterized by ten topics, each of which is explained extensively:

1. **Bodhicitta** - Bodhicitta is explained first because it is the entryway to the Mahayana path.
2. **Practice instructions** - Aspiring to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings is not enough; one needs to engage in the practice of study, contemplation and meditation on the Mahayana practice instructions of the Buddha and other masters.
3. **The path of preparation** - Having generated Bodhicitta on the Mahayana path of accumulation and having studied, contemplated, and meditated on emptiness and so forth by relying on the Mahayana practice instructions the practitioner then enters the Mahayana path of preparation. The path of preparation is entered when the practitioner cultivates a union of calm abiding and special insight taking emptiness as its object.
4. **Buddha essence / nature / lineage** - The nature of the mind that engages in Mahayana practice is the mind's *lack of true existence*. This lack of true existence of the mental consciousness is called 'Buddha nature' and serves as the basis for Mahayana practice. Having reached the path of accumulation and so forth one is now also able to realize that one possesses Buddha nature.
5. **Objects of Focus** - Having explained the basis of Mahayana practice, Buddha nature, the Ornament proceeds to explain the objects of focus of Mahayana practice.
6. **The three great objectives** - This topic is concerned with the objectives or the purposes of Mahayana practice, i.e. for studying, contemplating and meditating on the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras.
7. **Armor-like practice** - Having discussed the basis, objects of focus and objectives of Mahayana practice, the Ornament now explains the actual practice starting with armor-like practice. Armor-like practice deals with the development of the right motivation which serves as an armor or protection against unfavorable conditions.
8. **Engaged practice** - After the motivation for practice the engaged practice is explained. Engaged practice is concerned with the development of calm abiding, the six perfections, the Arya paths such as

the paths of seeing, etc., the four immeasurables and so forth.

9. Practice of accumulation - This topic is concerned with the practice of the accumulation of great merit and great wisdom.

10. Practice of definite emergence - This practice consists of the practice of eight different 'definite emergences' such as the practice of the three great objectives, of equally realizing the emptiness of all phenomena, of endlessly working for the benefit of sentient beings, and so forth.

The Way in Which the Ten Topics Characterize the Exalted Knower of Aspects

Even though the first chapter of the Ornament does not even mention the exalted knower of aspects (the omniscient mind of a Buddha) it nevertheless presents it. It presents it by way of those ten topics because the ten topics characterize or illustrate the exalted knower of aspects. Therefore, the question that arises here is how do the ten topics characterize/illustrate the omniscient mind of a Buddha?

Some of the earlier Tibetan translators assert that the ten topics characterize/illustrate the exalted knower of aspects by way of being its causes. In other words, by comprehending those ten topics as the causes of the omniscient mind of a Buddha one is effortlessly able to also comprehend the result - the omniscient mind. Lama Tsongkhapa and his followers assert that the ten topics characterize/illustrate the exalted knower of aspects by way of being its objects. The exalted knower of aspects is omniscient and therefore realizes simultaneously all the ten topics, i.e. realizes all the practices that are required to attain Buddhahood, making the Buddha the perfect guide to lead sentient beings to enlightenment. Thus, by comprehending the ten topics as the objects of the omniscient mind one is effortlessly able to comprehend the object-possessor - the omniscient mind.

Bodhicitta

From Kunnu Lama Rinpoche 1894-1977, *Vast as the Heavens deep as the Sea*:

*Even if a diamond is broken,
It does not stop being called a diamond.
Similarly, even flashes of Bodhicitta
Do not stop being called Bodhicitta.*

*If you start something, start it with Bodhicitta,
If you think of something, let the thought be of Bodhicitta,
If you analyze something, analyze it in the light of Bodhicitta.
If you investigate something, investigate it in the light of Bodhicitta.*

English: mind of enlightenment (or) mind generation

Sanskrit: *Bodhicitta* (*bodhi* = enlightenment , *citta* = mind)

Tibetan: 1. སེམ་རྒྱུ་སྤྱེད། / *Sem kye* - mind generation (*sem* = mind , *kye* = generation)

2. རྟམ་ཆུབ་སེམས། / *Jang chub Sem* - mind of enlightenment (*jang chub* = enlightenment,
Sem = mind)